

Guitar, coloring and Bible study

Press Release- 3/21/2017

By LCMS Missionary Tyler McMiller

Although most of the team's work here in Santo Domingo, rotates around the congregation in Las Americas, we are also preparing the terrain for a future mission in the center of the city of Santo Domingo called Ensanche Ozama. It is a middle class community surrounded by *barrios* or what is best translated as slums.

We have already written on the efforts to make contacts, through evangelistic events open to the community. Now let's talk about the fruits of those events, through one story that focuses on three people- Willie 15 years old, William 8 years old and their mom Berta.

Willie and William, two brothers, came to one of our evangelistic events. After meeting them, we were able to find where they live and sit down with their mother Berta. With the endless maze of winding roads and narrow allies that was no easy task. Where they lived was a typical *barrio* of concrete block homes built on the side of the heavily polluted Ozama River. The smell of the river filled their home. Berta was on her last weeks of pregnancy with her third child. After we talked, we agreed that I would teach 30 minutes of guitar, followed by 30 minutes of Bible study to her two children. Berta said she was interested but also seemed to be slightly suspicious by the offer.

The day rolled around and the two boys showed up after school. Thank the Lord! During the guitar class, Yanela colored with William while I taught guitar class to Willie. After learning a few chords we began studying the Bible together. Very quickly it became clear that they knew the Bible well, but when I asked the most important question of all, whether Jesus was God, they were hesitant. First they said no, then they said yes, then they said no and waited for me to say something. I told them he was God and explained how that is a great comfort for us as Christians.

The next week they came again. Before beginning the guitar class I asked them how their mother Berta was doing. The 8 year old told me, *más o menos*, more or less. During the pregnancy Berta had a C-section and not having the money to stay at the hospital another night, left the baby there and when she returned the next day the baby had died. We visited her in her home the next day and it was clear she was in a lot of pain but more than anything else she was distressed by the death of her son.

Over the past couple weeks we have continued visiting Berta. We brought her a food offering of sports drinks and canned food while she slowly recovers. Last week we visited her and she seems to have made a full recovery, although the cesarean scar, her own words, promises to be a reminder to her for the rest of her life. Meanwhile Willie and William consistently attend and grow in their faith around Christ. Visiting Berta with my wife Yanela has also proved an incredible blessing. Yanela has helped opened the door in ways that an American with an odd Mexican-Spanish speaking accent could never have hoped. Please keep this family in your prayers as we continue to visit Berta, teaching her children and overwhelming her with the good news of God's love in this hard time. God bless.

Tyler McMiller is an LCMS missionary currently serving in the Dominican Republic.

A son of Pastor Daniel McMiller, Tyler learned Spanish as a child living 7 years in Chile and Panama. During his time at Concordia Wisconsin, Tyler studied History and Spanish and worked in Hispanic ministry in Wisconsin for four years.

To learn more and information on how to support, follow the link-

www.lcms.org/mcmiller

